THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) and (b) ONGC has drawn up a systematic phase wise exploration programme in the deep waters of Western and Eastern offshore areas. About 65500 LKM and 28500 LKM seismic data have already been acquired in the Western anbd Eastern offshore respectively.

(c) and (d) For the first phase of drilling, 4 deep water locations have been identified. Two locations are in the Kerala Konkan offshore on the West Coast and one each in the Cauvery and K.G. offshore in the East Coast. Drilling is likely to commence after the monsoon in 1997.

Irregularities by Petroleum Dealers in Maharashtra

3571 SHRI GOVINDRAO ADIK: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) Whether Government are aware that various irregularities and manipulations are being increasingly committed by petrol/kerosene and cooking gas dealers in Maharashtra; if so, the details thereof;

(b) the details of the connizance taken by the petroleum companies the number of raids conducted/inspections carried out, cases of serious manipulations/ irregularities noticed and the action taken against the defaulting agents/distributors;

(c) the details of the agencies suspended during the last three years, company-wise; with their locations; and

(d) the details of fresh steps initiated to ensure clean and efficient marketing of petroleum products?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) to (c) 116 and 148 cases of irregularities/malpractices were detected at RO/SKO-LDO dealerships and LPG distributorships respectively during raids/ inspections in the last three years in Maharashtra.

Actions such as issue of warning letters, suspension of sales and supplies, imposition of fine, termination of the dealership/distributorship, etc. were taken under the Marketing discipline Guidelines in proven cases of irregularities/malpractices.

(d) In order to ensure clean and efficient marketing of petroleum products, steps such as furfural doping of kerosene, blue-dying of kerosene, density check etc. are taken and regular/surprise inspection of retail outlets/SKO-LDO dealerships and LPG Distributorships by field officers of the oil companies and inspection by Joint Industry Teams, mobile laboratories and officers of State Government agencies are carried out.

Action is taken against the erring dealers/distributors under the Marketing Discipline Guidelines.

Investment Plan of IOC

3572. SHRI YERRA NARAYANASWAMY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Indian Oil Corporation propose to invest Rs.2302 crores on new investment plan in 1997-98;

(b) if so, the various heads under which this investment would be made;

(c) whether any outside assessment plan has been made;

(d) if so, the name of the audit agency, if any, which have a second opinion of IOC's plan;

(e) whether many of these new plans are redundant or are not lost effective; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Indian Oil Corporation has proposals to invest